

*Africa. Comp. by Royal Adventurers &*  
 THE  
**C A S E**  
 OF THE  
**C R E D I T O R S**  
 OF THE

*Royal African Company of England.*



THE Creditors acknowledge themselves obliged to the Company, for *at last* condescending to treat them, as not *wholly* unworthy of their Regard; tho' they have but too much Reason to wish, that this *Tenderness* had been more *seasonably* exerted, in *preventing* those Calamities, which the Company *now* own themselves so little able to *relieve*.

THEY desire however, to *separate* their Case from the Company's (with which it has been industriously *blended*) and to be heard in their own Behalf, as they conceive themselves to stand in a more *advantageous* Light, and to be entitled to a *Priority* of Relief, whether it be applyed for as a Matter of *Justice*, or *Compassion*.

If the Company claim a *Right* to the *Assistance* of the *Publick*, from *Services* of which the *Publick* is supposed to have reaped the *Benefit*, it ought to be remembred, that those *Services* have been *partly* executed at the *Creditors* Expence; or if they ground such *Right* upon their *Property* in *Africa*, the *Creditors* ought to be considered as *Mortgagees* of that *Property*, and as such, to have the *Produce* applied, in the *first* Place, towards Satisfaction of *their* *Demands*.

In Point of *Compassion* likewise, the *Creditors* have Reason to expect a *Preference*, as the Company's *Losses*, or *Misfortunes* ought least, and last of all, to affect those, who neither *occasional*ed, nor could *prevent* them, and who, in Case of any good *Success*, would have been intitled to no Share of *their* *Profit*, or *Advantage*: A *Preference*! still *more* justly due to those, who from Time to Time, furnished the necessary *Stores*, and *Provisions*, by which the Company's *Forts*, and *Settlements* have been supported, and who appear therefore to have been greatly injured, by their *Misapplication* of the *Parliamentary Aids*, *expressly* granted to them for that very Purpose.

BUT should it be surmised, that the *Publick* have acquired a *Title* superior to that, both of the Company, and *Creditors*, either from what they have *already* contributed towards the Support of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements*, or from the *Necessity* there confessedly is, for their taking the whole future *Expence* of that Support upon *themselves*; or, *lastly*, by Means of some *latent Forfeiture*, supposed to have been incurred by the Company, it is submitted to the *Candour*, and *Equity* of *Parliament*, Whether they will *now* construe into a *Loan*, what they have once *freely given*, or how far they will judge it proper to *avail* themselves of the Company's present *Necessities*, or past *Misconduct*, to the *Prejudice*, at least, of innocent *Creditors*, who could not but look upon the Company's *Continuance* in *Possession*, as an *Evidence*, and *Admission* of their *Right* of *Property*, and who must therefore be presumed to have been *thereby* induced to give them a *Credit*, which they would *not otherwise* have done. A *presumptive Evidence*, 'tis true, but repeatedly *confirmed* by positive *Resolutions* of the Honourable *House of Commons*, by which those *Possessions* have been from Time, to Time, *expressly* declared to be the Company's *Property*.

If therefore the *Creditors* are (as they humbly conceive) intitled to *Satisfaction* out of the *Produce*, or *Value* of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements*, they hope it will not be thought *Presumption* in them, that they endeavour to prove this *Value equivalent*, at least, to *their Demands*.

WERE such *Value* to be estimated from the *Importance* of the *African Trade* to this Kingdom, the *Creditors* humbly apprehend, that without the *Help* of *Calculation*, the same



same would appear infinitely to *exceed* what the Company have alledged the Amount of their *Debts* to be : But as some *Objections* have, of late, been raised to the *Utility* of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements*, notwithstanding they have, by the *biggest Authority*, been declared *necessary*, it may not be improper to state, and examine what has been so objected.

AND, *First*, It is alledged, That the said *Forts* and *Settlements* ought to be considered, and valued as *Marks of Possession* only, because our *Territorial Rights* in *Africa* would be (as is pretended) *no less* effectually secured by any *other Marks* (tho' ever so slight, or untenable) by which they could be sufficiently distinguished, and ascertained.

BUT how little able *mere Marks of Possession*, without sufficient *Strength* to defend them, would be to maintain a *National Dominion* in so *remote* a Country, may be illustrated by the Fate of the *Portuguese* (who were once Masters of the greatest Part of the *Gold-Coast*, till dispossess'd by the *Dutch*) by the Treatment we ourselfes received from the *Swedes* in *Cromwell's* Time, and afterwards from the *Dutch*, in the Reign of King *Charles the II*. until we had rendered our *Marks of Possession* capable of *Resistance*, and (thereby only) *respectable* : And, *Lastly*, By the Attempt of the *French* to settle at *Annamaboo*, in 1739, notwithstanding the *Peace* then still subsisting between us, and our many indisputable *Marks of Possession*, such as, the Remains of an *English Fort*, the *Union Flag* hoisted on the King's House, and the *Quit-Rent* actually paid by our Company to the *Braffoo*, and *Corranteers of Fanteen*, for the *Fort*, and Roads of *Annamaboo*, *Aggab*, and *Annishan* ; which Attempt of the *French*, tho' happily defeated by the Accident of the *War* (by which they were prevented receiving the necessary *Supplies* from *Europe*) may now again be soon *resumed*, and, in all Probability, with *Success*, unless prevented by some speedy, and vigorous Efforts on the Part of *Great Britain*.

EXPERIENCE too has shewn, that we cannot, without *Forts*, or other *defensible Settlements*, hope, even among the *Natives*, to secure ourselves from *Enemies*, who sometimes, by strange, and sudden *Revolutions*, come upon us unawares ; more than once have the *Dawbnees*, a potent *Inland Nation*, pillaged, and destroyed our defenceless *Out-Factories* at *Whidab*, whilst our *Fort* there has protected, and secured *all* within its *Walls*, against several Thousands of these *invading Negroes* : Nor can we, from impotent, and defenceless *Marks of Possession*, expect to derive any *Influence* even amongst *Negroe Friends* (whose good Opinion it is so much *our Interest* to cultivate) as those Friends, during their frequent *domestick Wars*, or rather *mutual Incursions*, expect *Protection* for their *Wives*, *Children*, and *Effects*, from their *European Neighbours*, and therefore must always be supposed to reverence them, in Proportion to their *Power* ; and, in Fact, of all the Nations on the *Gold-Coast*, the *Dutch* are the *most esteemed* by the *Natives*, because reputed to *excell*, both in the Number, and Condition of their *Forts*.

*Lastly*, AMONG many other Advantages to Trade in general, there certainly arises this very great Convenience from *fixed*, and *defensible Settlements at Land* ; that *here*, both the *private*, and *Corporation Traders*, *Europeans*, as well as *Natives* (many of which come down from the *remotest Inland Parts*) are sure at *all Times* to find a *safe*, and *ready Market*, either for *Sale*, or *Purchase*, without the *Hazard*, or *Expence* of waiting for *slow*, and *accidental Opportunities*.

Secondly, IT is alledged, That the Company's *Forts*, and *Castles* are *unnecessary*, because, great Part of our Trade is carried on to those Coasts of *Africa*, where we have *no Settlements* at all.

THE *Faſt* contained in this *Objection*, is undoubtedly *true*, but does by no Means warrant the *Conclusion* ; for tho' it *should* be granted, that the *Forts*, and *Settlements* we have in *some* Parts of *Africa*, are of no use to the *Trade* we carry on to *others*, it will not follow, that they are of *no Service*, or *Necessity* to the *Trade* of those *Places*, where they *exist*.

BUT what is thus *proposed* to be granted for Argument-fake only, is so far from being *true*, in Fact, that our *Right of Trade* to those *open*, and *unsettled* Parts of *Africa*, is a *Consequence* of our *Dominion*, and *Strength* in *others* ; witness the *Confiscations* of our *Ships*, and *Cargoes*, and the *Imprisonment* of our *Traders*, first by the *Portuguese*, and afterwards by the *Dutch* (notwithstanding our *Naval Power*) until we had acquired, and established a sufficient *Footing*, and made ourselves *respectable at Land*.

NOR is the *Right of Trade* only, but the *Trade* itself of every *European Nation* indebted to its respective *Settlements* for many, and great *Advantages* ; for *there* the *Trader*, when disappointed on the *open Coasts*, either by the *Natives*, or by *European Rivals*, can *depend* upon being, in *all Events*, supplied with *Wood*, *Water*, and *Provisions* ; *there* he is sure to find a friendly *Reception*, and *Relief*, in case of *Shipwreck*, and to obtain *Shelter*, and *Protection* for himself, and *Cargo*, both from *Enemies*, and *Pirates* ; *there*, and *only there*, when by any *Accident delayed* of his *Voyage*, either to *Europe*, or *America*, he may securely house his *Goods*, and by landing his *Negroes*, *save* them from the *Ravage* of that *Sea-Pestilence*, the *Scurvy*, so particularly fatal to the *Blacks*.

UPON this Principle, no doubt it is, that other *European Nations*, having once established a competent *Strength* in those *Places*, which produce the *most valuable Slaves*, and which they therefore esteem to be of the greatest *Consequence* to *Traffick*, thought it *unnecessary* to

to erect any Forts, or to make any Settlements elsewhere ; but tho', in this respect, we may seem to be upon a *Par* with them, yet, as those Places in which neither of us pretend any Dominion, lie open to the cheapest *Navigation*, and greatest *Force*, our Rivals will always have this Advantage of us, that their Ships actually *under-sail* ours, and (being better manned) can command, and intercept our Trade, and that, whether we attempt it by *Land*, or *Water*, being able in the one Case to Spare *larger* Factories, and to send them further up the Country, than we can do ; and in the other, to over-awe the *Natives* from coming off to us in their *Canoes* ; all which they *have* done, and *can* do, without committing one Act of Hostility against *us*, or *appearing* to violate the *Letter* of any Treaty.

Thirdly, It is alledged, That our *Forts*, and *Settlements* do not secure us an *exclusive* Trade. THIS Objection is founded in *Truth*, with regard to the *Dutch*, and *Portuguese*, because we have never thought it our *Interest* to exclude them ; the first being our *Neighbours*, with whom it is necessary to keep up a Friendly Intercourse ; and the others furnishing us with *Gold*, in exchange for *Slaves*, and other *Commodities*, as well of the Manufacture of *Great-Britain*, as of the Produce of *Africa*. But with respect to the *French*, it was but about the Year 1736, (when our *Forts*, and *Settlements* began to be in a declining State) that they attempted to *Trade*, or so much as to *touch* upon those *Coasts*, in which we claim a *Property* ; a *Liberty* they ought not to be indulged in, as they refuse the like to all other *Europeans* upon the *Gum-Coast*, of which by Virtue of their *Forts*, and *Settlements*, they claim the *sole* Dominion. The *Dutch* likewise, tho' for their *own* Convenience they allow us to *Traffick* with *themselves*, will by no Means suffer us to *Trade* with the *Portuguese*, within reach either of their *Forts*, or of their *Cruisers*, except at *Whidah*, which being possessed by *different European Nations*, is the only *neutral* Place upon the *Coast*.

If what the *Creditors* have thus *briefly* offered in answer to the *Objections* (and they are not aware of any *other*) shall be thought *Satisfactory*, and *Conclusive*, they presume to hope, that the *intrinsick Value* of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements*, will be allowed to bear a *reasonable* Proportion to the *Importance* of the *Trade*, which, upon that *Supposition*, is *supported*, or at least, greatly *benefited* by them ; and, in that Case, they conceive the said *Value* will, by all Persons acquainted with *Commerce*, be understood, and agreed to be much *more* than sufficient to *answer* the *Creditors Demands* ; nor do they apprehend that the said *Forts*, and *Settlements* can be valued at less, even by those who think them of no further use then as mere *Marks of Possession*.

So likewise, if the *Estimate* of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements*, be taken from what it has *cost* to erect, support, and preserve them, their *Value* must, undoubtedly, amount to a *prodigious* Sum ; but, as it is in the *Company's* Power alone to make out that amount by an *exact* Calculation, and the *Creditors* do not think it necessary for *their* Purpose to go so far, they will content themselves with what the *Company* have averred in their *Petition*, and which they must therefore be supposed able to *prove*, viz. *That their Debt*, amounting to about 100,000*l.* *has arose from the Expence of supporting their said Possessions*.

Lastly, If the *Estimate* of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements* might be formed from the *Value*, which *other Nations* set upon their *own*, and may therefore be presumed willing to give for *ours*, in Case the *Company* were permitted to dispose of them to *Foreigners*, the *Value* of the *Company's Possessions*, which are very *numerous*, and of *large Extent*, will by the two following Instances appear to be *immense*.

IN 1713, The King of *Prussia* demanded of the *Lords of Trade*, and *Plantations*, for a *Fort* at *Cape Threepoints*, with a couple of small *Redouts*, which he proposed to sell us, no less then 200,000 *Crowns*, being about 50,000*l.* *Sterling* : And in the Year 1718, the *French Senegal Company* actually sold a small *Fort* in the *River Senegal*, and one in the *Island of Goree*, to a new *French Company*, for 1,600,000 *Livres*, amounting to about 80,000*l.* *Sterling*.

Upon the Whole, the *Creditors* having thus claimed the *Company's Possessions*, as a *Security* for their *Demands*, and having (as they presume to hope) proved the *Value* of the one, to be more than equivalent to the other, most humbly submit their *Case* to the *Judgment* of *Parliament*, in full *Confidence* that in what *Shape* soever the *publick Wisdom* shall think it necessary to dispose of the said *Forts*, and *Settlements*, all due *Regard* will be had to private *Property*, and all possible *Tenderness* be shewn to the just *Claims* of *injured Creditors*.

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